

With rising home energy costs, a 50-percent cut in funding will jeopardize the LIHEAP program. October and November are especially busy months for the community action agencies that administer it. The program year begins October 1, and many agencies sign up the vast majority of LIHEAP participants right away. Most States get almost 90 percent of their annual allotment in the first quarter.

In 3 months, the loss to Massachusetts will be \$2 million. Half of the State's 4,000-person staff will face layoffs. Yet our State serves more than 400,000 persons, including many from the Gulf States.

According to Action Inc., a community action agency in Gloucester, MA, a temporary 50-percent cut in funds will result in the elimination of its housing and family legal services. Three hundred fifty very low-income local families who face housing problems will be at risk of homelessness.

The family law program will also be eliminated. Yet it helps 75 very low-income residents a year by providing legal assistance on issues such as divorce, custody, visitation and child support. Four hundred twenty-five families will not have the legal assistance that helps prevent evictions and solve critical family issues.

Action Inc. is only one example of the numerous agencies in Massachusetts and across the Nation facing layoffs and program cuts or even elimination because of the harsh cuts in continuing resolution.

It is wrong for the administration and the House of Representatives to shred America's safety net even further when so many Americans are already falling through it. We know how to mend it. All we lack is the will and the leadership to do it.

The community services block grant agencies have been fighting to alleviate poverty with great skill. It is time the Government stopped forcing them to do so against such heavy odds. The challenge is too critical for Americans to ignore any longer. We can no longer remain indifferent to the least of those among us.

Personal responsibility, community responsibility, government responsibility—they go hand in hand. When one of them breaks down, as it has now, we have to fix it. I am saddened by Congress's harsh treatment of those most in need. We should fully fund the community service block grant, not cut it in half.

It may be inconvenient for House Members to take a plane ride back to Washington to fix the problem they created, but it does not compare to the hardships millions of poor people face today and every day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the third reading and passage of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 68) was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third

time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 68) was passed.

Mr. COCHRAN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006—Resumed

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, is the pending business the Defense appropriations bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is H.R. 2863, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2863) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1922

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS] proposes an amendment numbered 1922.

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following:

SEC. . Notwithstanding Sec. 101 of H.J. Res. 68, the Community Services Block Grant program shall be funded at the same rate of operation as in Division F of Public Law 108-477, through November 18, 2005.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this will ensure, once our Defense bill is passed, that this glitch in the community services block grants will be eliminated. I hope everyone understands that the sooner we get this bill to the President, the better off this program will be. In the meanwhile, this is assurance that the Senate stands behind the total figure that is in the Senate bill as reported out from the Senate today.

I ask for adoption of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate? If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1922.

The amendment (No. 1922) was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRASSLEY and my

colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, be added as cosponsors of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, we have not been notified by any Senator that they wish to offer an amendment to the Defense bill today. It is my understanding later today there will be an agreement that all amendments in the first degree to this bill should be filed by 5 o'clock Monday.

Under the circumstances, since other Senators wish to speak on nongermane matters, unless there is someone who wants the floor right now to talk about defense—I am informed there may be an amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, pending the arrival of the Senator who wishes to offer an amendment, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business in order that the Senator from North Dakota can speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. DORGAN and Mr. WYDEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1805 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

STRATEGIC GASOLINE AND FUEL RESERVE ACT OF 2005

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as of yesterday afternoon, nearly a quarter of this country's refinery capacity is offline.

Already feeling the impact of high prices at the gas pump prior to the two hurricanes, Americans are bracing for additional price increases as refinery operations remain shutdown in the gulf coast. Americans are also bracing for record high energy costs this winter.

While the administration has ordered the release of petroleum from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, without refinery capacity, putting crude oil on the market does little to nothing to alleviate immediate supply constraints and high prices at pump.

What hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught is that we must be ready for a rainy day. That is why it is critical to our national and economic interests to build a gasoline reserve to keep the country moving forward in case of an emergency.

Witnessed by the ill-preparedness of the response in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we must prepare now for the potential impact of future catastrophes.

Most importantly, as fuel supplies remain tight, we must prepare to alleviate the impact that another natural disaster, refinery fire, or pipeline explosion has on the Nation fuel supply and as a result our national economy.

Yesterday I introduced the Strategic Gasoline and Fuel Reserve Act of 2005.

The reserve would require the Department of Energy to hold and manage 40 million barrels of unleaded gasoline and 7.5 million barrels of jet fuel to be used in times of supply shortages—shortages that adversely impact the U.S. economy.

The Secretary is tasked with identifying at most five strategically significant regional locations for the fuel reserve. For instance, one could be located in the Northeast, one in the Midwest and one in the California.

Finally, the Secretary of Energy must establish procedures to release fuel from the reserve to those typically engaged in the sale of distribution of gasoline or jet fuel.

Hurricane Katrina forced about 1 million barrels of refined product offline. The reserve would provide 40 days' worth of gasoline supply based on the amount shutdown from Katrina—or almost 2 weeks worth of gasoline supply to fill the void of offline capacity caused by both Hurricane Rita and Katrina together.

Furthermore, the reserve would include 7.5 million barrels of jet fuel—enough to keep the fleet in operation for 40 days if faced with a disaster of the magnitude of Katrina.

We have witnessed three airlines enter into bankruptcy—partly because of increasing fuel costs. U.S. airlines pay an additional \$190 million in annual fuel costs for every penny increase in the price of a gallon of gas.

It is important to keep a viable stock of jet fuel available to ensure the seamless operation of one of America's important transportation fleets.

But, in total, consumers are the ones hardest hit by rising fuel costs.

A fuel reserve like the one in this legislation could provide a price buffer when pipelines or refinery outages occur, helping to mitigate price spikes that bite consumers in the pocketbook.

Consumer Federation of America has urged Congress to create a national fuel reserve. They recognize that American households who own and drive cars will consume 100 billion gallons of gasoline this year—costing them over \$200 billion at the pump. This represents a cost of nearly \$2,000 for each household with a car, and an increase of nearly \$600 a year in the past 4 years alone.

A study commissioned by the State of California concluded that a regional reserve, which is what would be created under this bill, could save consumers \$1 billion every time supplies were af-

fected. With a nationwide reserve, that number is even higher.

As Democrats continue to push for a national policy of energy independence, a gasoline and jet fuel reserve is an important component of that debate.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD material in support of the bill.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SUPPORT FOR THE STRATEGIC GASOLINE AND FUEL RESERVE ACT OF 2005—SEPTEMBER 29, 2005

CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Mark Cooper, Director of Research, Consumer Federation of America (CFA), said about the Strategic Gasoline and Fuel Reserve Act of 2005, "Four years ago, at the first signs of trouble in the gasoline market, we called for a regional product reserve that would be used to not only ensure supply, but to dampen the wild roller coaster ride that has been afflicting the driving public. This legislation is a step in the right direction and hopefully marks the start of a broad re-orientation of energy policy toward policies that protect consumers from pricing abuse."

UNITED AIRLINES

Mark Anderson, Vice President, Government Affairs, United Airlines, said, "Senator Durbin understands that escalating fuel prices, driven in part by shortages in supply, have a negative impact on travel and economic stability for individuals and businesses throughout Illinois and the nation. This proposal, which will ensure that emergency supplies of refined products like gasoline and jet fuel are located at strategic locations across the country, will provide economic stability when it is most needed. We applaud Senator Durbin's efforts to address this issue of critical importance."

AMERICAN AIRLINES

According to Will Ris, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs for American Airlines, "the proposal of Senator Durbin to establish a reserve of refined oil products is a farsighted idea that should be implemented quickly. The hidden story of the current crisis is that the cost of refining crude oil has increased at a much more rapid rate than the price of crude itself. By creating a reserve of refined products, the fluctuation in the markets due to temporary refining shortages can be reduced substantially. We particularly applaud Senator Durbin's proposal to build reserves of jet fuel as well as gasoline. This shows a strong understanding of the importance of commercial aviation to the economy."

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. H.R. 2863.

AMENDMENT NO. 1903

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. SALAZAR] proposes an amendment numbered 1903.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide that certain local educational agencies shall be eligible to receive a fiscal year 2005 payment under section 8002 or 8003 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965)

On page 220, after line 25, insert the following:

SEC. 8116. APPLICATIONS FOR IMPACT AID PAYMENT.

Notwithstanding paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 8005(d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7705(d)(2) and (3)), the Secretary of Education shall treat as timely filed, and shall process for payment, an application under section 8002 or section 8003 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 7702, 7703) for fiscal year 2005 from a local educational agency—

(1) that, for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004, submitted an application by the date specified by the Secretary of Education under section 8005(c) of such Act for the fiscal year;

(2) for which a reduction of more than \$1,000,000 was made under section 8005(d)(2) of such Act by the Secretary of Education as a result of the agency's failure to file a timely application under section 8002 or 8003 of such Act for fiscal year 2005; and

(3) that submits an application for fiscal year 2005 during the period beginning on February 2, 2004, and ending on the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, amendment No. 1903, which I am working on with my colleagues to resolve, will provide impact aid funding to the children of the service personnel in Fort Carson, CO. It will restore \$1.2 million in needed educational impact aid funding to the El Paso County School District No. 8. The money for this amendment has already been appropriated within the Department of Education budget.

The El Paso School District educates the children of thousands of service men and women serving our Nation on the Fort Carson military base. Many of the loved ones of these students and staff of the El Paso County School District have been deployed to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In fact, over 11,000 soldiers from Fort Carson are currently deployed in Iraq. That is one-half of Fort Carson's total force.

Due to a technical error, the Department of Education has denied the school district access to a \$1.2 million set-aside for that school district's program. The result is that school district may have to fire as many as 12 teachers and teachers' aides. This amendment simply permits the school to access the money already set aside for it.

I recognize this is not the traditional vehicle for this fix, but, frankly, given the stakes for the school district and the fact that the education of the children of the men and women from Fort Carson who are in Iraq is at stake, I believe we owe it to the families there to fix this problem, and to do it now.

I note, too, that I have discussed this issue with the HELP Committee.